

By: Senator(s) Posey, Dearing, Tollison,
White

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 622

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION URGING THE UNITED STATES FOREST
2 SERVICE TO RECONSIDER ITS RECENT REGULATION REGARDING TRAVEL
3 RESTRICTIONS ON NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS IN MISSISSIPPI IN
4 ORDER TO ALLOW THE LESS RESTRICTIVE USE OF OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES
5 FOR GAME RETRIEVAL AND CAMPING.

6 WHEREAS, more Americans and Mississippians than ever are
7 using off-highway vehicles (OHV) to enjoy the outdoors. Last
8 year, OHV users accounted for between 11 and 12 million visits to
9 national forests and grasslands; and

10 WHEREAS, in the right places, and managed carefully, OHVs are
11 an appropriate use of national forests; and

12 WHEREAS, today, appropriately managed recreation, including
13 use of OHVs, is one of four key issues affecting national forests
14 and grasslands; and

15 WHEREAS, in 2005, the National Forest Service published a new
16 rule for providing motor vehicle access to national forests and
17 grasslands. The final rule requires each national forest and
18 grassland to designate those roads, trails and areas open to OHV
19 use. The rule does not designate roads or areas for OHVs but
20 provides a framework for making those decisions at the local
21 level; and

22 WHEREAS, this travel management rule reads as follows:

23 "The responsible official may include in the
24 designation the limited use of motor vehicles within
25 a specified distance of certain designated routes
26 solely for the purposes of dispersed camping or big
27 game retrieval. Such designations represent
28 site-specific decisions associated with specific

29 roads and trails or road or trail segments, rather
30 than a blanket exception to the rule. Designations
31 under 36 CFR 212.51(b) will be applied sparingly to
32 avoid undermining the purposes of the rule and to
33 promote consistency in implementation. Regional
34 foresters will coordinate designations within states
35 and between adjoining national forests to promote
36 consistency"; and

37 WHEREAS, 100 years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt (an avid
38 hunter and outdoorsman) led the United States Congress in creating
39 the National Forest System, to preserve natural resources and
40 forest acreage for future generations. National Forest System
41 lands in Mississippi include: Holly Springs National Forest,
42 Delta National Forest, Tombigbee National Forest, Bienville
43 National Forest, Homochitto National Forest and DeSoto National
44 Forest. President Roosevelt (who hunted bear in the Mississippi
45 Delta) and National Forest System founder Gifford Pinchot
46 envisioned the system as a continuing source of timber and fresh
47 water to sustain communities which was totally open to hunters,
48 anglers and outdoor enthusiasts; and

49 WHEREAS, the new Forest Service travel management regulation
50 will result in overbearing restrictions on Mississippi's hunters,
51 anglers and outdoor enthusiasts, who have been denied traditional
52 access to National Forest System lands for game retrieval, camping
53 and off-highway vehicle use; and

54 WHEREAS, national forests and grasslands are shared resources
55 held by all Americans. Recreational visitors experience them in
56 many different ways. Across the country, some of our most
57 effective examples of OHV management involve state and local
58 governments, motorized and nonmotorized users, and other affected
59 citizens working together. Partnerships are necessary to
60 accomplish trail maintenance, restore damage, educate users and

61 promote a spirit of cooperation among national forest visitors;
62 and

63 WHEREAS, it is preferable that the Forest Service work
64 together with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries
65 and Parks, conservation groups in Mississippi and other
66 recreational users of National Forest System lands to allow
67 traditional uses of this land:

68 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
69 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
70 we do hereby urge the United States Department of Agriculture
71 Forest Service to reconsider its recent regulation regarding
72 travel restrictions on National Forest System lands in order to
73 allow the use of off-highway vehicles for game retrieval, fishing
74 and camping.

75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be certified by
76 the Secretary of State and transmitted to the Chief of the United
77 States Forest Service, to the Secretary of the United States
78 Department of Agriculture, to the President of the United States
79 and to members of Mississippi's congressional delegation, be
80 forwarded to the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and
81 Parks and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.